



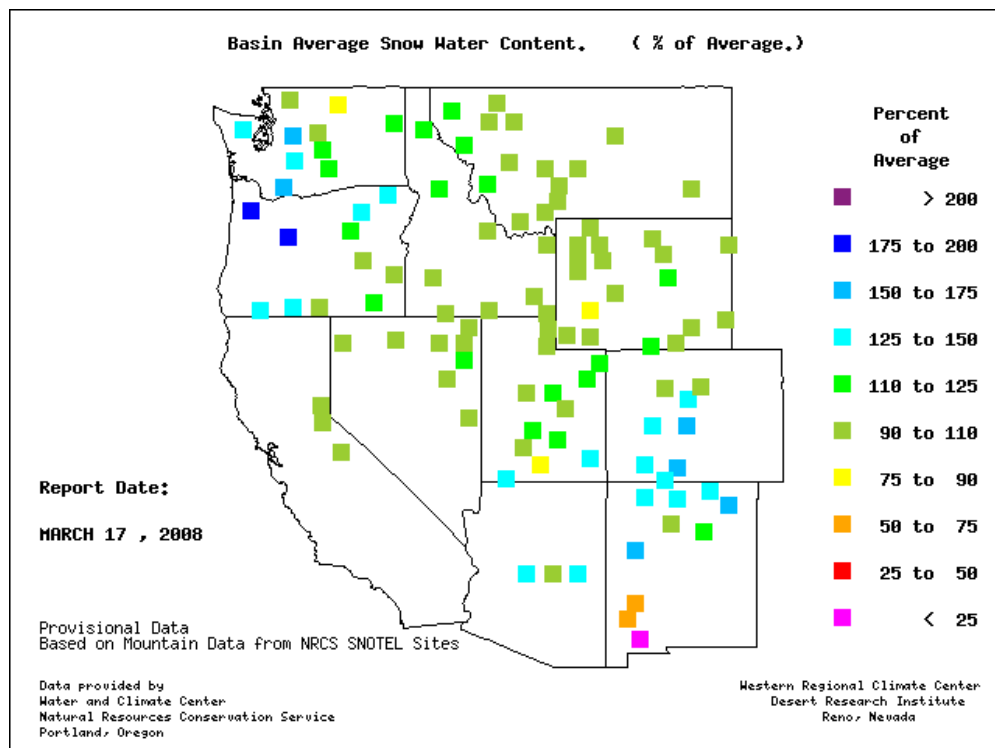
Under the Big Sky March 14, 2008

This week is Flood Safety Awareness Week in Montana!

For more information on Flood Safety, and Montana Flood issues, visit:

<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/tfx/hydro/FAW/fawmain.php?WFO=GGW>

Montana Snow Pack: The Missouri River headwaters and Yellowstone River headwaters areas are seeing slightly below to slightly above normal snow pack. The good news in that is that the snowpack is better than we saw a year ago. In southern Saskatchewan and Alberta, the runoff into the Milk and Missouri River Basins is well below normal.



To see comparisons of individual basin areas, visit:

<http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/snow/data/comparison.html>

For general information on where Montana is in regards to snow and precipitation, visit:

<http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/snow/data/>

For Saskatchewan data, visit:

<http://www.swa.sk.ca/WaterManagement/Documents/SpringRunoffPotential.pdf>

Spring is almost here: March 20th is the first day of spring, or the technical term, Vernal Equinox. There is an article that explains why it changed from March 21 to March 20 a few years ago. You can read it here: http://www.space.com/spacewatch/050318_equinox.html

Speaking of Spring: A recent article in Sciencedaily.com discussed that the Aurora Borealis is more prone to occur around the time of the vernal equinox because of the tilt of the earth and the magnetic pole lining up better with the sun. The article is available here: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/03/080306161746.htm>

Glaciers Melting Quicker than Expected: Recent research looking at the rate of glacial melt has shown that the majority of glaciers around the world are melting faster than expected. Only one glacier (in Chile) has grown over recent years. If you'd like to read the article, visit: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/03/080317154235.htm>

Skywarn Training: Here are the upcoming training events. We have a few locations to schedule still, so stay tuned!

Date	Time	Location
4/7/08	2-4 pm	Sidney -USDA ARS Facility
4/7/08	6-8 pm	Sidney -USDA ARS Facility
4/9/08	6-8 pm	Zortman -School
4/10/08	6-8 pm	Scobey -Nemont Friendship Room
4/14/08	6-8 pm	Fort Peck -Interpretive Center
4/29/08	6-8 pm	Jordan -Senior Center
5/5/08	6-8 pm	Opheim -School Gymnasium
5/6/08	6-8 pm	Wibaux/Beach -Beach, ND Ambulance Building
5/13/08	6-8 pm	Malta -Library

Lots of happenings at NWS Glasgow: (It's been so busy I almost forgot to do this newsletter!)

On my own time, I traveled with the Glasgow 5-7 grade science fair participants to the regional science fair in Havre. It was great to see the interest the kids from around the region had in science. There were two weather related displays at the fair, including one that looked at which roof pitch offered the best protection against tornado damage.

We had a review of the Glasgow fire weather program by our regional headquarters in Salt Lake City. NWS Glasgow provides fire weather forecasts and services for the BLM, USFWS, MT DNRC, BIA and local level fire agencies.

We also co-hosted a workshop in Wolf Point with the Fort Peck Tribes Drought Advisory Committee and the National Drought Mitigation Center. This workshop focused on several new

satellite drought monitoring products that are available, known as vegDRI and vegOUT. **I'll be sending out a special edition of Under the Big Sky soon to cover many of the National Drought Mitigation Tools we learned about this week.**

We co-hosted with the NWS Billings and Great Falls offices a two day workshop for eastern Montana Disaster and Emergency Service Coordinators. This workshop brought in guest speakers via conference call and in person to highlight the importance of partnerships between the NWS and our DES coordinators and the people who support them. We discussed the products and services of the Missouri Basin River Forecast Center, the forecast process, upcoming tools that may be of use for local officials, and we review the June 16, 2007 hailstorm and what went well, and areas we could work on.



Photo: Some of the attendees at the DES Workshop, showing Rick Seiler (Valley County), Curt Petrik (Sheridan County), Frank Datta (Wibaux County), Jim Zabrocki (Custer County), Carol Raymond (Rosebud County), Jim Kraft (Yellowstone County), Charlie Hanson (State of Montana DES) and Steve Apfel (NWS Glasgow Meteorologist in Charge)

Our one hour time slot at the Farm Expo in Plentywood ended up being two hours with all the discussion and questions that were asked. There's no doubt weather is always a "hot" topic in Sheridan County. John Pulasky and I presented the "State of the Weather" giving an overview of this past year, and a look at the next 3-6 months. It was great to meet some of you, and talk about local weather issues.

One of our forecasters, Matt Ziebell, attended an open house at the Northeast Montana Children's Museum in Glasgow with their new weather exhibit. The museum had a busy day, with people waiting at the doors for the exhibits to open.

I also visited Williston recently, and did two TV interviews at KXMD, one on upcoming Skywarn trainings sessions with the Williams County DES coordinator, and another on upcoming severe weather awareness weeks. I was also able to visit with the staff at NWS Williston and discuss some new technology and get prepared for severe weather season.

NOAA Happenings:

A recent report by NOAA discussed how the ocean conditions in the Pacific were affecting salmon returns. If you like salt water fishing, this may be of interest to you:

http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2008/20080303_salmon.html

Also, the U.S. Tsunami Warning program got its final two buoys in place and has completed the tsunami warning system for the U.S. Since the Indonesian tsunami in Dec 2004, the following upgrades have been made to the system:

- Installing 49 new or upgraded tide gages
- Installing or upgrading eight seismic stations
- Expanding the network of DART buoys from six (exclusively in the eastern Pacific) to 39 (from the western Pacific to the Atlantic)
- Growing the number of TsunamiReady communities from 16 to more than 50 today
- Developing 26 inundation forecast models and implementing a new Tsunami Warning System
- Extending the operations of the Pacific and West Coast/Alaska Tsunami Warning Centers to 24 hours a day
- Assisting Australia and Indonesia with installing tsunami warning systems off their coasts.

To see a map of all the buoy locations, and to find out more, visit:

http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2008/20080310_buoy.html